

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7584

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0168

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, BC

SUBJECT:REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINTS STUDY

REF: STATE 020621

1. FOLLOWING IS RESPONSE REFTEL. IT IS PROVIDED WOUTH ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN CFR NO. 3 IN ORDER TO MEET FEBRUARY 2 DEADLINE.

2. BOTSWANA WOULD VASTLY PREFER TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT ON BUILD-UP OF MILITARY FORCES. HOWEVER, DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION AND INCREASED INSTABILITY AND THREAT OF VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA COULD IMPEL BOTSWANA TO INCREASE ITS DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES. BOTSWANA'S CONCERNS ARE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

A. SOVIETS, CUBANS AND SOUTH AFRICANS ARE INVOLVED IN URLY ANGOLAN CIVIAL WAR WITH POSSIBILITY OF REFUGEES AND GUERILLAS CROSSING NARROW CAPRIVI STRIP INTO NORTHEASTERN BOTSWANA IF
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MPLA DRIVES UNITA FORCES TO SOUTHERN EXTREMITY OF ANGOLA.

B. RHODESIA, SO FAR FRUSTRATING AND INEFFECTUAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR MAJORITY RULE HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASED TERRORIST ACTIVITY AND EXTENDED CALL-UP OF SMITH-REGIME RESERVISTS. RHODESIAN SITUATION IS ALREADY TROUBLESOME; A STEADY STREAM OF REFUGEES CROSSES BORDER AND RHODESIAN FORCES HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN AT LEAST ONE CROSS-BORDER SHOOTING INCIDENT IN RECENT PAST. FAILURE TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT ON MAJORITY RULE THERE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY RESULT IN INCREASED INSURGENCY ACTIVITY AND INCREASED PRESSURE ON BOTSWANA TO ALLOW INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS SANCTUARY ON ITS TERRITORY. IF BOTSWANA BOWS TO THIS PRESSURE, IT WILL DO SO THE KNOWLEDGE THAT BOTH RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE PRONE TO MOVE ACROSS THE BORDER TO ROOT OUT THESE BASES.

C. SPECTER OF SOUTH AFRICAN EXPANSIONISM, AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE INCURSION INTO ANGOLA AND THE MORE RECENT INTRODUCTION OF A BILL IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT TO AUTHORIZE MILITARY INTERVENTION BEYOND ITS BORDERS, HAS ALREADY HEIGHTENED CONCERNS HERE ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA'S INTENTIONS. INTERNALLY IN SOUTH AFRICA, THERE APPEARS TO BE INCREASED RACIAL POLARIZATION WITH FLASHES OF VIOLENCE.

D. DESTABILIZING TENDENCIES IN NAMIBIA WILL PROBABLY INCREASE, ESPECIALLY IF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS RETURN ACROSS THE BORDER, ALLOWING SWAPO, IN COOPERATION WITH THE MPLA, SANCTUARY IN ANGOLA FOR INSURGENCY EFFORTS.

3. ROOT CAUSE OF INSTABILITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IS, OF COURSE, CONTINUED MINORITY RULE REGIMES AND RACIAL OPPRESSION. IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT SOVIETS WOULD HAVE VENTURED INTO ANGOLA IF SOUTH AFRICA HAD NOT BEEN A PARIAH AND THEREFORE UNABLE TO GENERATE ALLIED SUPPORT.

4. ALL OF THESE REASONS POINT TO THE NEED FOR INCREASING PROGRESS TOWARD HUMAN DIGNITY, EQUALITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION AS THE BEST MEANS FOR REDUCING TENSIONS AND THE THREAT OF CONFLICT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE BEST EFFORT TO BE MADE BY THE UNITED STATES IN PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THIS REGION WHIV WISH TO EXERCISE RESTRAIN IN ARMS ACQUISITIONS WOULD BE

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INCREASED EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE IN RHODESIA, SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA.

5. WE DO NOT SEE BOTSWANA OPENLY ASSOCIATING HERSELF WITH THE UNITED STATES IN SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS BECAUSE OF HER INTEREST IN MAINTAINING A NONALIGNED POSTURE. ALTHOUGH VERY GRATEFUL FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, WE JUDGE THAT BOTSWANA WOULD CONSIDER NATIONAL SECURITY AS A TOP PRIORITY IF THE MILITARY/SECURITY

SITUATION CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE WITHIN THE REGION.

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